

Cross Systems Task Force Annual Report Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

The Cross Systems Task force commenced its work in early 2014. The first task was to assemble a team that was inclusive of agencies that have daily interactions with children in each community. Task force members include representatives from the following agencies: Criminal Justice Institute, Judicial Center, State Court Administration (data), Department of Mental Health, Education / Schools, Department of Corrections, Court Appointed Special Advocate Program, Public Defender, Juvenile Court judges, Juvenile Probation, Department of Child Services, Indiana State Bar Association, Law Enforcement, Prosecutor, and Placement and Service Providers.

The first goal of the assembled team was to define the term “cross system youth” differentiating from “cross-over” or “dual system youth”. For the purposes of the task force the following definitions were created:

Dual System Youth:

Dually identified Youth - Youth who are currently involved with the juvenile justice system and have history in the child welfare system but no current involvement.

Dually-Involved Youth – Youth who have concurrent involvement (diversionary, formal, or a combination of the two) with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Dually-Adjudicated Youth – Youth who are concurrently adjudicated in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (i.e. both dependent and delinquent).

Cross System Youth

The children in our communities who have multi-systems needs. These are children – yet to be fully defined – who require cross systems assistance outside of or prior to involvement with the dependency or delinquency processes.

- They also may be, based on our research, children who should be separated from the existing delinquency and dependency systems and folded into a new status.
- For example, they may be: Homeless teens, older teen runaways, elder teen truants, mentally ill children, or 18, 19 or 20 year olds with housing and secondary education problems.

The key goals and objectives of the Cross-System Task Force Include:

- Identify barriers in statute, regulation, or practice to addressing (a) cross system youth issues and (b) dual jurisdiction issues;
- Complete a policy analysis designed to increase cooperation between systems through recommendation of new practices including recommendations for system/law or regulatory reform;
- Addressing efficiency in meeting child’s needs;
- Identify areas and recommend the incorporation of restorative justice practices where appropriate;
- Identify areas of service provisions and recommend the incorporation of family engagement practices including Family Group Decision Making practices where appropriate; and
- Develop, monitor and report on pilot projects re: Dual Jurisdiction.

Progress and Findings:

The Task Force has incorporated three initial sub-committees based on the age of children to address the aforementioned goals and objectives. These subcommittees include Early Childhood (ages 0-8), Adolescent Youth (ages 9-15) and Transition Youth (ages 16-21). The Task Force believes issues related to the goals and objectives relate to each age group differently so that each objective should be addressed by age as opposed to the identified needs or gaps.

Issue of Mental Health:

- Determinations of Entry Points for Cross System Youth: Schools, Emergency shelters, Juvenile detention centers, and interaction with law enforcement.
- Findings things that Work: The Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) through Department of Child Services (DCS) fills gaps in service delivery to this population; The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) of State agencies working on behalf of individually referred children to find services and promote best practices; The Crisis Intervention Teams for youth that are underway in 12 counties in Indiana funded by the Division of Mental Health & Addiction (DMHA), working with law enforcement, local systems of care, and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI).
- Areas of Need: Common Definitions, Acronyms, Understanding of Programs that affect children; Community Mental Health Wraparound (1915i) to be expanded to include different populations (NEED: Enhancement of service providers for the population); Cross-disciplinary workforce training in working with the dually diagnosed population; First responders, law enforcement, and teachers need to be trained in de-escalation techniques.

Issue of Homelessness:

- Defining what it means to be homeless: Kinney-Vento Definition- Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority versus Department of Education
- Findings things that Work: Hearth Act 2009- Shelters can serve families; Collaborative Care (DCS) to transition youth aging out of foster care.
- Areas of Need: Understanding housing is part of a the *recovery* process; Wrap around housing model with services being provided in addition to housing populations (NEED: Enhancement of service providers for the population); Housing for youth entering the community following a Department of Corrections placement; Determination of evidence based practices that work with this population; and Cross walk to map available funding streams for this population

Next Steps:

- Cross-System Symposium: The Cross System Symposium is being designed and implemented to have a team of individuals which includes the juvenile judicial officer, the chief probation officer or chief of police, the Department of Child Services Local Office Director, and decision makers from local mental health and schools. The symposium would include a guided discussion on defining cross system youth in each community, identifying the youth in each community including services available and needed, the agencies that would need to be involved in addressing this population in each community

and any barriers to implementation. Each team will be responsible for creating an action plan that will be tabulated by the Cross Systems Task Force to develop common themes and needs across Indiana;

- Timeline: Symposium- July 24, 2015
Identifying Themes and Needs: July, August, 2015
Presentation of Findings from Symposium to Task Force: October 27, 2015
- Identify barriers in statute, regulation, or practice to addressing (a) cross system youth issues and (b) dual jurisdiction issues.
 - Coordinate efforts of the Cross System Task Force and the Data Sharing and Mapping Task force to address the issues of information sharing and confidentiality.
 - Timeline: This process is on-going and includes the Co-Chair of the Cross-System Task Force attending the Data Sharing and Mapping Task Force Meetings.
- Identify barriers in statute, regulation, or practice to addressing (a) cross system youth issues and (b) dual jurisdiction issues.
 - Coordinate efforts of the Cross System Task Force and the Child Services Oversight Committee to address the issue of status offenders. There is continued debate on the issue of status offenders (which includes Runaway, Truancy, Curfew, Disobedience, and Alcohol related offenses in Indiana Code) which requires a thorough study and discussion about this population.
 - Timeline: On-going.
- Complete a policy analysis designed to increase cooperation between systems through recommendation of new practices including recommendations for system/law or regulatory reform
 - Possible implementation of HB 1196, Dual Status Youth. This bill includes a statutory definition of Dual System Youth for Indiana and the process by which a juvenile case may be diverted from either systems based on the early identification of youth who are involved in either the CHINS or delinquency system. The bill contains key provisions including the establishment of a Dual System Assessment Team and the judicial authority to establish a lead agency. The assessment team includes membership that is reflective of the Cross System Task Force who will assist in determination as to agency responses to the new provisions in the statute.
 - Timeline: Effective date of HB 1196: July 1, 2015
- Develop, monitor and report on pilot projects re: Dual Jurisdiction. The Cross System Task Force is partnering with the Casey Family Programs, Judicial Engagement project to implement up to five (5) pilot projects in the State of Indiana. These pilot sights will develop and implement strategies to identify dually identified, dually involved or dually adjudicated youth. These pilots will also identify the unique needs for this population and work with community and State agencies to address these needs.
 - Timeline: The Cross System Task Force is currently working with Casey Family Program in the implementation of pilot sights.

- Develop, monitor and report on pilot projects re: Dual Jurisdiction. The Marion Superior Court, Juvenile Division has engaged the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps to offer technical assistance to the Court in implementing a pilot project for dually involved and dually adjudicated youth in Marion County.
 - Timeline: February, 2015- On-sight technical assistance
 - March, 2015 - On-sight technical assistance
 - June, 2015 – On-sight technical assistance

The technical assistance on this project includes three (3) subcommittees that focus on data, barriers in confidentiality and statutes, and services. The Co-chair of the Cross System Task Force serves as co-chair of the project.

A forth sub-committee will be added to the Cross System Task force to address the on-going development, monitoring and reporting on these pilot projects.

- Timeline: June, 2015

Hon. Charles Pratt and Don Travis, Co-Chairs
Cross Systems Youth Task Force